



Jason Haas

14th District County Supervisor



14TH DISTRICT COUNTY CONNECTION

FALL-WINTER 2016

14th DISTRICT SUPERVISOR

Jason Haas

901. N 9th Street, RM 201
Milwaukee, WI 53233
(414) 278-4252

jason.haas@milwaukeecountywi.gov
county.milwaukee.gov/Haas

COUNTY BOARD COMMITTEES

Parks, Energy &
Environment, Chair

Finance & Audit,
Member



Dear Neighbor,

One of the Milwaukee County Board's most serious duties is to pass a balanced budget for the following year. We do so with an eye toward preserving services, including public safety, transit, highways, child support, courts, airports, and parks. In 2016, this process was made more difficult by the \$27 million structural deficit we faced. County Executive Chris Abele proposed instituting a \$60 Vehicle Registration Fee (VRF) and a tax levy increase. My colleagues on the County Board and I were able to craft a budget that preserves services, lowers the County Executive's proposed tax levy, and cuts the VRF in half. This newsletter explores the need for the fee, and examines the cuts we made as a result. Now, more than ever, we need the state to grant us dedicated funding for our transit, highways, and our parks and cultural assets. Doing so would remove those assets from the property tax levy, and give our parks and transit systems a huge boost.

I am still moved by the deep love our citizens have for the Milwaukee County Parks System. As a County Supervisor, I have fought to make sure our parks get funding to ensure they remain safe and enjoyable for our families. The County has found great improvement through the Humboldt Park Beer Garden, which is a beloved community destination. As not every park can have a beer garden, neighbors have found working with each other is often the best way to improve their neighborhood park. Friends of Morgan Park turned the sleepy green triangle at the corner of KK and Morgan into a locus of community activity. With any luck, Friends of Mitchell Airport Park will find similar success in 2017. I encourage you to work with your neighbors to improve your parks and the community. Together, we can make them all better.

Wishing you a healthy holiday season,

Supervisor Jason Haas, District 14

COMMUNITY MEMBERSHIPS

- Airport Gardens Neighborhood Association
- Bay View Dads
- Bay View Historical Society
- Bay View Neighborhood Association
- Friends of Mitchell Airport Park
- Friends of Morgan Park
- Garden District Neighborhood Association
- Holler Park Neighborhood Association
- Humboldt Park Friends
- Town of Lake Neighborhood Association
- Wilson Park Neighborhood Association



Supervisor Jason Haas, District 14

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901 N. 9th Street, Room 201
Milwaukee, WI 53233

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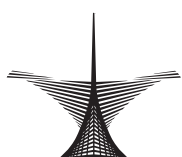
Supervisor Haas listens to feedback from residents at the Milwaukee County Annual Budget Public Hearing.

Supervisor Haas invites you to enjoy FREE Milwaukee County attractions!



Free to all the first Thursday of every month, sponsored by Kohl's. County residents get \$2 off every day.

800 W. Wells St., Milwaukee
(414) 278-2728
www.mpm.edu



MILWAUKEE ART MUSEUM

Free the first Friday of every month for all visitors, sponsored by Meijer.

700 N. Art Museum Dr., Milwaukee
(414) 224-3200
www.mam.org



Free on Mondays from 9:00 a.m. to Noon for Milwaukee County residents. Excludes major holidays.

524 S. Layton Blvd., Milwaukee
(414) 257-5611
www.milwaukeedomes.org



2017 Free Days: 1/7, 2/4, 3/4, 10/7, 11/4, 12/2, Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day & New Year's Day.

10001 W. Bluemound Rd., Milwaukee
(414) 256-5412
www.milwaukeezoo.org

Standing Up for the 14th District



Supervisor Haas advocates for district residents during the 2017 budget debate.

Humboldt Park Beer Garden Update

The Humboldt Park Beer Garden has proven to be a great value for Humboldt Park and the community. St. Francis Brewery, which operates the beer garden, reported 2016 sales of \$310,692. From those sales, \$15,535 was placed into a dedicated Humboldt Park maintenance fund. This marks a strong increase over 2015 sales, which were around \$220,000, which generated an \$11,000 maintenance fund contribution.

Per the County's contract with St. Francis Brewery, Milwaukee County keeps 20% of gross revenue. 5% of beverage sales, or \$.25 from every pint sold, is placed in the Humboldt Park maintenance fund for current and future park improvements.

We look forward to toasting another successful season in 2017 and we hope you will join us there.

Milwaukee County Board Passes Balanced 2017 Budget

Until this year, no Milwaukee County Executive has proposed new tax increases since 2002, and because of this the budget gap has finally caught up with us. We can no longer kick the can down the road. Closing the budget gap for 2017 required significant new revenue or unacceptable cuts. Supervisors found a middle ground and passed a responsible, balanced budget.

Supervisors listened to constituents' concerns about Abele's \$60 wheel tax, and balanced those concerns with the need for revenue by cutting the wheel tax in half, to \$30. Supervisors also cut more than \$13.6 million in spending and reduced the County Executive's proposed increase in the property tax levy in order to balance the budget. Eliminating the wheel tax entirely would require an additional \$13.6 million in painful cuts to transit, parks, and public safety.

Most people agree that a strong transit system is essential for our regional economy. Rob Henken of the non-partisan Public Policy Forum testified at the October 31, 2016 budget hearing that at least "some VRF revenue is required" in 2017 in order to maintain existing service levels, address infrastructure needs, and avoid budget gimmicks. The County Comptroller issued a report on our transit needs and the impact of a VRF, saying "within the next five years, without major changes in passenger rates or route reductions, the [bus transit] system will need \$28 million of additional local support on an annual basis."

If the VRF was entirely eliminated from the 2017 budget, the consequences could be devastating for our economy. \$0 VRF revenue means bus service would have to be cut by 16% or nearly 230,000 hours. Critical, job-creating infrastructure projects to maintain our roads and highways would be delayed or canceled. The GO Pass, which is not just popular but also provides independence to seniors and the disabled, would have to be eliminated entirely.

Some people believe that the extremely popular GO Pass is a major budget buster, but this is not true. The GO Pass provided about \$3 million in bus service for seniors and the disabled in 2016, which is only about .2% of the transportation budget of \$153 million. Starting in 2017, GO Pass users will have to pay a \$5 registration fee for the pass and beginning in 2018, GO Pass users will pay a \$1 daily fare. Together, these measures will generate about \$2.2 million annually.

This issue was one of the single most difficult items the Board has considered. In the end, the choice was to do something now that no one liked, or have to make potentially catastrophic cuts to our bus system, and to its dependent customers

Supervisor Haas Restores Over \$600,000 to County Parks & Cultural Organizations

Supervisor Haas continues to bring improvements to the 14th district and Milwaukee County. All of Haas's budget amendments were adopted as part of the 2017 county budget. These amendments had no impact on the tax levy.

- Secured \$275,000 in bonding for installation of new playground equipment and surface at Holler Park, replacing the 14-year old sand-covered playground;
- Discovered \$250,000 previously unaccounted for in the budget, and used it to restore the Parks Amenities Matching Fund (PAMF), which was eliminated in the county executive's proposed budget; and,
- Restored \$90,000 to the Milwaukee County Cultural Artistic & Musical Programming Advisory Council (CAMPAC) with money previously earmarked for lobbying. CAMPAC provides sustaining or operating support to professional, nonprofit arts organizations in Milwaukee County.

Farewell to Supervisor Jursik



Supervisor Haas gives farewell remarks to Supervisor Patricia Jursik of Cudahy at her last County Board meeting in April 2016.

and riders. Cuts at the state and federal level have made such difficult decisions necessary. More difficult decisions await in future years.

Additional general budget info:

- The 2017 Milwaukee County budget totals about \$1.1 billion in expenditures.
- About \$387 million of that comes from direct revenue (fees)
 - \$291 million from property taxes, \$392 million in state and federal aid
 - \$74 million from the .5% sales tax
 - \$40 million in bonds proceeds
 - \$5 million from last year's surplus

Milwaukee County has five primary sources of revenue, and our options for new revenue are limited:

- Direct Revenue, in the form of fees like zoo admission, bus fares, and the new VRF (which must be spent on transportation)
- A sales tax, which is capped by state law at .5% (or half a cent on the dollar)
- Property taxes, which are also capped by state law (this year's budget levies about \$4 million of the allowable \$6.4 million increase)
- Proceeds from municipal bonds (borrowed money we must pay back)
- Federal and state aid, which we don't control

Of the \$1.2 billion, the greatest expenditures include:

- \$340 million goes to health and human services
- \$328 million for transportation and infrastructure projects
- \$157 million for public safety
- \$131 million for county administration
- \$92 million for parks, recreation and cultural institutions
- \$65 million to the courts
- \$51 million to pay down debts
- \$3.4 million for the legislative and executive branch administration

Other numbers:

- The 2017 property tax levy will total \$291,077,828; last year it was \$286,985,125
- The 2017 property tax levy is a 1.43% increase over last year, or just over \$4 million
- The 2016 property tax levy was a 1.45% increase over the previous year, about \$4.1 million
- A \$30 vehicle registration fee would generate about \$13.6 million in 2017
- A \$60 vehicle registration fee would generate about \$27.1 million in 2017



Food Truck Friday

Area residents enjoy sunshine and fresh food at Food Truck Friday in Morgan Park this past September.